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Cuba file

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24 October 1962

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Rec'd by Dr. [redacted]
10/30/04 AS/DR 26 Oct.

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Historical Analysis of U-2
Overflights of Cuba

1. This memorandum is responsive to your request for an historical analysis of the relevant actions bearing upon U-2 coverage of Cuba.

2. In the case of the Cuban operations, as in the case of all other covert overflight activities, the COMOR has endeavored to establish the urgency and the frequency of flights required to satisfy the objectives of the Intelligence Community with a minimum of risk to the capability and assets employed.

3. Mindful of the political repercussions which inevitably result from a mishap during the conduct of these operations, the COMOR has tried at all times to document its requirements with sufficient thoroughness to insure that subsequent close examination would lead to a reasonable conclusion that the anticipated results were at least commensurate with the risks involved.

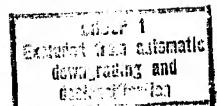
4. Under this philosophy, of course, the concept of "over kill" cannot be justified, nor has any development in the Cuban situation indicated that any other approach would have served us better in the past.

5. Procedurally, the following elements are all relevant to the accomplishment of overflight:

a. The recommendations of the USIB Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance and its definition of requirements on behalf of the Intelligence Community;

b. The United States Intelligence Board;

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c. The Special Group;

d. Operations.

6. It should be understood that procedure has varied in regard to the submission of COMOR recommendations for overflight reconnaissance. Generally COMOR recommendations have been forwarded directly to the Special Group, it being understood that the COMOR representatives' views had been expressed with the approval of their principals on the Board. On some occasions, as in "Intelligence Justification and Requirements for Overflight of Cuba" (USIB-D-41.5/28; COMOR-D-24/22; 10 October 1962), the Board, after reviewing the COMOR recommendation, took additional action. In the very important instance cited, the Board:

a. Agreed that the Chairman should express to the Special Group the Board's view that the targets in Groups II and III (Tabs B and C of Attachment 1 of reference) should be surveyed as promptly as possible, and that the results of such initial surveillance should determine the subsequent frequency of coverage to be recommended.

b. Requested COMOR to submit for consideration at the USIB meeting on 17 October a specific list of those priority targets in Group IV (Tab D of Attachment 1 to the reference) which should be covered, taking into account technical factors, intelligence justification, what type of intelligence could reasonably be expected to be obtained, and accessibility of the target.

7. The Special Group not only acted on COMOR, or in certain cases USIB, recommendations which are briefly summarized in the minutes of the Special Group but also noted the monthly forecast for CIA air activities. This document was used as a means of keeping the Special Group currently apprised of what missions were soon to take place in pursuance of Special Group approval. It provided an opportunity for the Special Group to bring to bear any

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special factors which may have developed since a program had been approved. A summary of the monthly forecast as applicable to Cuba from June 1961 to October 1962 is set forth in Tab B. The preparation of the forecast was the responsibility of the Assistant Director Office of Special Activities/DDR/CIA (previously Development Projects Division/DDP/CIA).

8. The Office of Special Activities/DDR/CIA had the responsibility for carrying out the decisions of the Special Group. A record of the flights by mission number and date is set forth at Tab C. The record also shows SAC flights.

9. In order to focus directly on the period of greatest historical interest, namely, from 1 June 1962 to the present, a running account showing the relationship as applicable between the various elements described above is set forth as Tab A. A careful study of this paper suggests the following conclusions:

a. That operations from June 1962 until October 12 (when SAC took over) was active every day feasible. This means that there were sufficient missions approved to keep it busy, taking account of weather, malfunctions, aircraft maintenance, or fuel contamination.

b. That on days when the weather was good, operations could have flown more missions if

(1) More aircraft had been available or,

(2) A number of missions had been authorized to go simultaneously when good weather existed.

10. Included for reference there is attached at Tab D a memorandum prepared by Mr. Tom Parrott giving a resume of the relevant actions by the Special Group. Also of interest and for ready reference is a copy of a letter sent by the Acting Director of Central Intelligence to the Secretary of Defense on September 10 regarding the institution of low-level reconnaissance over Cuba.

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11. Finally, there is included at Tab F a brief memorandum prepared by the DD/I area recounting the chronology in the suspicions, acquisition of evidence, and confirmation of SAMs, MRBMs, and IL-28s.

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Chairman
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

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TAB A

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME OF ACTIONS OF COMOR AND
OSA/DD-R/CIA (OPERATIONS) ON OVERFLIGHT OF CUBA

13 June COMOR D-24/13 "Request for Special Cuban Missions" dated 13 June 1962 para 3. . . .
"It (COMOR) also concludes that the missions now approved for July be conducted at weekly intervals in early July (2 missions)." This document and recommendation were approved by the Special Group on 14 June 1962.

27 June

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29 June Mission 3051 successful.

6-8 July Weather o. k. for mission on 8th, but A/C aborted and returned to Edwards Air Force Base -- camera malfunction.

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TAB A

- 9-10 July Mission 3085 given Go for the 10th. Abort mechanical.
- 11 July Another 24-hour delay -- mechanical.
- 12 July 3085 flew successful mission.
- 5 August 3086 flew successful mission on schedule.
- 6 August 3087 scheduled for 8th. Weather bad and op reasons caused cancellation on 8th.
- 10 August Looked at weather for possible mission on 12th. Weather forecast resulted in cancellation at Alert briefing.
- 13 August The next COMOR document concerning requirements for Cuba was 13 August 1962: "Requirements for U-2 coverage of Cuba", COMOR D-24/14, [REDACTED]. "That the COMOR priority requirements in Cuba should be covered by U-2 recce during August. (This would probably take two missions.) It is proposed that these be planned so as to meet those requirements and in addition the operational requirements for CIA/DDP."
- 19-24 August Looked at weather daily for poss. 3087. Went to Go-No-Go on 24th. Weather was bad and 3087 was canceled.
- 24-29 August Continued looking daily and 3088 was flown on the 29th. This completed authorized number of missions for August.

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TAB A

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- 5 September 3089 flew on schedule 5 September.
- 6-16 September Looked at weather daily [REDACTED]
- 16 September Went to Go-No-Go for 3090 on 16th. Weather went bad and mission was canceled.
- 17 September 3091 flew successful mission.
- 18-21 September Looked daily at weather until 3092 was alerted for 22 September and went to Go-No-Go before canceling because of weather.
- 22-26 September Looked at weather daily except Saturday 22nd and 3093 was flown on 26 September.
- 27 September No alert -- weather bad.
- 28 September 3094 alerted -- canceled at Go-No-Go because of weather.
- 29 September 3095 flew on 29 September.
- 29 September-
2 October Looked at weather daily 3096 and 3097. Alerted for 2 October but canceled at mission plan time.
- 3 October No alert -- weather bad.
- 4 October Mission 3098 alerted.
- 5 October 3098 flew successful mission.

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TAB A

- 5 October The COMOR D-24/20 was the next request for U-2 coverage. Essentially, this paper recommends frequent and regular U-2 coverage of the island (of Cuba) to the extent that the primary objectives are covered once a month.
- 5 October 3099 flew, but aborted -- mechanical.
- 6 October USIB D-41.5/26 (COMOR D-24/21) dated 6 October 1962 entitled "Intelligence Justification for Overflights of Cuba" presented for information and comments to the United States Intelligence Board meeting on 9 October prior to its presentation to the Special Group on 9 October. The paper in effect stresses the "pressing and continuing need for up-to-date intelligence on the progress of the Soviet arms build-up in Cuba."
- 7 October 3100 flew successful mission.
- 10 October USIB D-41.5/28 (COMOR D-24/22) dated 10 October 1962. Subject: Intelligence Justification and Requirements for Overflight of Cuba -- a statement of USIB's action on the subject paper and recommends that "the Chairman (USIB) should express to the Special Group the Board's view that the targets . . . should be surveyed as promptly as possible, and that the results of such initial surveillance should determine the subsequent frequency of coverage to be recommended."
- 10-12 October Looked at weather daily -- no alert. On 12th we were told operational control was going to SAC and forecasts were canceled.
- 13-14 October SAC -- Mission 3101.